

also empower them to separate the oil-rich southern territory in Iraq?

As a result:

A. The Iranian regime prevents the establishment of security, Stability and democracy in Iraq and poses an immediate threat to our Country's integrity and liberty. It is the main obstacle to our Independence and the quick departure of the Multi-National Force.

B. Presently, the main dispute is between democracy and Dictatorship. The first and most important political alignment in Iraq is between democratic and patriotic forces with their various inclinations and thoughts on the one hand and affiliates of the Iranian regime on the other.

C. During the elections and formation of the new government of Iraq, an Iraqi alternative was formed against the option presented by Iran's ruling mullahs, thus providing an encouraging prospect for the country.

D. In this geopolitical situation and in this juncture of History, democracy in Iraq and democracy in Iran are interdependent, Guaranteeing each other's survival.

E. The solution and the only encouraging prospect for Neutralizing these threats come through eviction of the Iranian regime from Iraq and recognition of the status of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, which is the principal bulwark against the Iranian regime's interventions. Similarly, the MEK's disarmament upset the strategic balance in this sensitive region of the world in favor of the Iranian regime.

The Iranian regime, however, launched an astounding demonizing and Disinformation campaign against the MEK. Iran's agents in the Interior Ministry kidnapped MEK members while others discontinued the government's allocation of food rations, medicine and fuel for residents of Ashraf City contrary to all Islamic and Iraqi traditions. Through the Iraqi National Security Advisor, the government announced that the MEK "may not even use their allocation of food." (November 18, 2005)

The Iranian regime's fingerprints are evident in paragraph C of Article 21 of the Constitution. Contrary to all international laws on Asylum, this paragraph disentitles the accused of the right to asylum merely based on the unverified charge of terrorism.

Repeated calls by the Iranian regime and its operatives in Iraq for Retribution of the MEK and confiscation of their property (ex. *Asshahed* weekly, April 4, 2005), the Iranian embassy's advertisements in the Iraqi press demanding "retribution of members of this organization as a more important opening for democracy in Iraq", setting their "prosecution" or at least "expulsion" as a "test" for the government of Iraq (*Badr* weekly, September 5 and November 27, 2005) and urging their referral to the "Criminal Court" (*Asshahed* weekly, January 15, 2006) are the most obvious signs of collusion with the Iranian regime.

Having investigated the MEK's 20-year residence in Iraq and stressing their readiness to defend the rights of the MEK in any court of law, over 12,000 Iraqi jurists declared in January 2006, "The MEK has never interfered in Iraq's internal affairs and the claim that the Organization participated in the suppression of the Kurds or Shiites is a sheer lie fabricated by the Iranian regime to tarnish the image of its opposition and alternative."

We urge the following:

1. Agreement of the government of Iraq with the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran and the coalition of National Council of Resistance of Iran on a worthwhile legal and political status for them in Iraq;

2. Acknowledgment of MEK members' right to political asylum in Iraq and ensur-

ing respect for their right to own their places and Properties;

3. Modification of article 21C of the Constitution in the Course of reviewing this clause, so that the Iranian regime would not be able to manipulate it against its opposition;

4. Commitment of the government of Iraq to international laws, conventions and agreements on the status of the MEK in Iraq. Particularly with regards to the principle of "non-refoulement" in relocating people from one country to another as verified by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) in the case of the MEK;

5. Coordinated measures by the government of Iraq and the MNF-I to secure the release of the two abducted MEK members.

We declare that:

The terrorist designation of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, 120,000 of whose members and sympathizers have been murdered by the Iranian regime and is the prime victim of state-sponsored terrorism is neither legitimate nor credible and should not be regarded as a basis for relations with this organization.

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 921, a resolution reaffirming this Chamber's steadfast support for the State of Israel and condemning Hamas and Hezbollah for engaging in unprovoked and reprehensible armed attacks against Israel on undisputed Israeli territory, among other provisions.

On June 16, 2000, Israel unilaterally withdrew its troops from areas in Southern Lebanon. It was a monumental stride in the long and difficult march toward Middle East peace, one that lent if only fleeting promise for a cessation of violence along the Lebanon-Israel border. The idea was simple: Israel would end an occupation long cited as a serious grievance by Israel's foes, and those foes, denied that grievance, would end attacks on Israel. Any further attacks on Israel from formerly occupied areas would invite a robust military response. That equation for peace, however, was quickly undone.

After the withdrawal, Hezbollah and other belligerents boasted not of a promise of peace, but of defeating the Israeli military and forcing it into retreat. Rather than planning for peace and building a strong civil society in Southern Lebanon, Hezbollah created a sophisticated military infrastructure and denied control of the region to the democratically elected Lebanese Government.

One week ago, Hezbollah, following a similar Hamas kidnapping in June, attacked an Israeli military outpost in undisputed Israeli territory, killing three soldiers and taking two hostages. Since then, Hezbollah has continued attacks on Israel by firing deadly rockets into Israeli urban centers like Haifa. Those rockets, whose warheads are often packed with ball bearings that turn into molten shrapnel upon explosion, are meant to kill and maim indiscriminately.

No country in the world would tolerate such vicious attacks upon its homeland nor threats to its sovereignty without responding and acting to ensure its longer-term security. If we support the Israeli State's right to exist, then we cannot make Israel an exception among nations. Israel must possess the right to defend itself.

Lastly, even as this war rages, I believe it is important to work steadfastly toward peace, because there can be no military solution to this conflict. As it combats Hezbollah, I urge Israel to take measures to limit casualties among the civilian population and to not irrevocably undermine Lebanon's young government, which was the product of the inspiring cedar revolution.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEES AT NASA'S MICHoud ASSEMBLY FACILITY

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLIE MELANCON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. MELANCON. Madam Speaker, today I offer House Resolution 892, to give honor and thanks to those who braved Hurricane Katrina's fury in service to their country. As we approach the 1-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, I would like to recognize the men and women who stayed behind to protect NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility in eastern New Orleans. The "Michoud Hurricane Ride-Out Team" was comprised of 38 Lockheed and NASA employees who risked their lives to protect the facility that produces the Space Shuttle external fuel tank, a vital component of the Shuttle program. Were it not for their efforts, the Shuttle program could have been grounded for years. In fact, if Michoud had been destroyed by Katrina, the U.S. would not be able to fulfill its commitment to its international partners, as there would have been no way for the U.S. to ferry vital supplies to equip the International Space Station. The "Ride-Out Team" volunteered to stay and protect valuable space flight hardware critical not only to NASA's Space Shuttle Program, but to the future of human space exploration. The Michoud facility is a vital component of America's Vision for Space Exploration, since derivatives of the external tank are part of the design for the next generation space craft.

As hurricane winds exceeded 130 mph and storm surge topped the 19 ft. levees surrounding the facility, the team worked tirelessly manning the pumping station and generators. After all was said and done, those dedicated individuals pumped more than 1 billion gallons of water out of the facility. Because of their efforts, operations at Michoud resumed mere weeks after Katrina's landfill.

Many of the "Ride-Out Team" lost everything they owned to the storm and many didn't know what had happened to their families until days after the storm had passed. They persevered even though all land routes to the facility had been cut off and they had no electricity or water for 21 days.

For their bravery in the face of unbelievable destruction and their unquestionable dedication to the space program, I ask this body to